

*Charles Safford, President of the NH Veterans Home Resident Council, is named 2007 Judith D. Griffin Advocacy Award winner.*

More than sixty years ago Charlie Safford was flying combat missions in B-17 bombers during World War II. He served as a Tech Sergeant from 1942 to 1945 in the US Army Air Corps. "There was many a hole in the plane," he remembers, "but our guys on the ground were great at patching them up."

For the past the past six years he has lived at the New Hampshire Veterans Home with fellow veterans from World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. He became vice president of the Residents' Council four years ago and has served as its president for three years. On April 4 he was honored with the 2007 Judith D. Griffin Advocacy Award. The award, created by the New Hampshire Office of the Long Term Care Ombudsman Advisory Board, is presented annually to recognize persons who have made outstanding contributions to enhancing the quality of care, quality of life, and the enhancement of the rights of residents of long-term care facilities.

In a letter to Safford, the New Hampshire Office of the Long Term Care Ombudsman Advisory Board commented, "What you do for the Residents of New Hampshire Veterans Home exemplifies this mission. Your efforts to advocate on behalf of all Veterans at the Veterans Home by serving as the Resident Council President, helping residents to problem solve, following up with resolution of issues and advocating for the residents' needs who may not be able to advocate for themselves all add up to the selection of you as this year's candidate."

Safford was honored at a luncheon in Concord, New Hampshire last week. He is the third individual to win this prestigious award.

Safford is modest about winning. He says, "I'm humbled by it. I feel like I'm having a sweet dream and I don't want to be awakened. I'm tremendously honored, but I'm just doing what they elected me to do. I try hard to listen and see what can be improved." He explains that when residents come to him with something they don't know how to solve, "I tell them how to solve it, I tell them who can help, or I solve it for them—The other officers on the Residents Council do the same."

Barry Conway, NH Veterans Home Commandant, adds, "We're honored that Charlie was selected—and deservedly so! At the Veterans Home we are very committed to making sure our residents feel comfortable speaking up if they are concerned about anything at all. Charlie does a great job representing them. He's very patient, fair, and an excellent advocate."



*Charlie Safford (center), with his son, Nephi Safford and daughter, Charlene Miller*